

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAB-02 DHA-02 IO-13 AID-05 EUR-12

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R 172300Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2432

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PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: LOCAL REACTION TO JACK ANDERSON STORY ON ANTI-SEMITISM
IN PANAMA

REF: PANAMA 4158

1. JACK ANDERSON'S JUNE 16 COLUMN ON PANAMA WAS
IN YESTERDAY'S MIAMI HERALD (WHICH IS WIDELY READ
HERE BY PANAMANIAN AND ZONE RESIDENTS ALIKE).
IT WAS CARRIED ACROSS THE ENTIRE OP-ED PAGE WITH AN
EIGHT COLUMN BANNER, "TORRIJOS, QUADDAFI FORM UNHOLY
ALLIANCE" UNDER A KICKER READING "PANAMA WELCOMES
ARAB TERRORISTS' INVESTMENTS". IN ADDITION TO THE
ARTICLE AS CARRIED BY THE WASHINGTON POST, THE HERALD
ARTICLE HAD A "FOOTNOTE" WHICH READS AS FOLLOWS:

2. "WE SUBMITTED OUR EVIDENCE TO THE PANAMANIAN
EMBASSY FOR COMMENT. WE HEARD FIRST FROM RICARDO
HOLZER, THE NEWISH COMMUNITY LEADER IN PANAMA, WHO
SENT US A MESSAGE THAT HE HAD RECEIVED STRONG
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ASSURANCES FROM THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT REJECTING
ANTI-SEMITISM. THE TIMING OF HIS MESSAGE SUGGESTS
THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN PRESSURED BY THE GOVERNMENT
TO CONTACT US. AN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN, AFTER
CABLING HIS GOVERNMENT ASSURED US THAT 'NO ANTI-
SEMITIC POLICIES OR SENTIMENTS EXIST IN PANAMA'.
HE POINTED OUT CORRECTLY THAT PANAMA HAS CONSISTENTLY

SUPPORTED ISRAEL."

3. LOCAL MEDIA GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE JUNE 17 TO PANAMA'S PUBLIC DENIAL IN WASHINGTON. SEMI-INDEPENDENT "STAR AND HERALD" AND "ESTRELLA" FRONT-PAGED WASHINGTON DATELINE STORY CONTAINING THE PANAMANIAN EMBASSY STATEMENT, ALONG WITH AN AP ITEM ON LEWIS MEETING WITH ISRAELI AMBASSADOR SIMCHA DIMCHITZ. LEWIS REPORTEDLY ASSURED DIMCHITZ THAT THERE WAS NO ANTI-SEMITISM IN PANAMA AND THAT THE "SUBSTANTIAL JEWISH COMMUNITY HERE WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED AND PARTICIPATED IN ALL FACETS OF NATIONAL LIFE". HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT "RAQUEL PAUZNER TORRIJOS, WIFE OF GENERAL TORRIJOS, IS OF JEWISH ORIGIN" AND THAT TORRIJOS' CHILDREN "ARE BEING SCHOOLED AT THE JEWISH ALBERT EINSTEIN INSTITUTE".

4. PRO-GOP "MATUTINO'S" JUNE 17 EDITION FRONT-PAGED AN EFE WASHINGTON DATELINE ITEM THAT SUMMARIZES THE ANDERSON ARTICLE AND QUOTES THE PANAMANIAN EMBASSY'S STATEMENTS THAT IT HAD PRESENTED AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT REJECTING THE CLAIMS MADE IN THE ARTICLE TO ONE OF ANDERSON'S ASSISTANTS ON JUNE 9 AND THAT "ANY ANTI-SEMITIC STATEMENTS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE IN PANAMA BY PANAMANIAN CITIZENS DO NOT REPRESENT THE OPINION OF THE GOVERNMENT NOR HAVE ITS SUPPORT." "CRITICA" HAS IGNORED THE STORY.

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5. THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS FOR SOME TIME REALIZED THAT IT HAD A TIGER BY THE TAIL ON THIS QUESTION. IN "MATUTINO" OF JUNE 10 THERE WAS A LENGTHY (43 COLUMN INCHES) ARTICLE BY A PANAMANIAN PROFESSOR, RICARDO MUNOZ TEJEIRA, ON PANAMA'S RELATIONS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED IN BOTH PANAMANIAN SPANISH-LANGUAGE SUNDAY PAPERS, THE GOP-CONTROLLED "DOMINICAL" AND RELATIVELY INDEPENDENT "ESTRELLA". ARTICLE IS A REASONED EXPLANATION OF PANAMA'S EFFORTS TO "ESTABLISH A STABLE EQUILIBRIUM IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES AS A MEANS OF RAISING PANAMA'S INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL IMAGE." PANAMA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MIDEAST PEACE-KEEPING MILITARY FORCE AND TORRIJOS' TRIP TO LIBYA ARE DESCRIBED IN THE ARTICLE AS TACTICS WHICH WERE SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING "RECOGNITION OF PANAMA'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION BY BOTH ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES." THE ARTICLES, OBVIOUSLY

PLANTED BY THE GOVERNMENT, ALONG WITH THE PUBLICATION OF
DAVID MIZRACHI'S PHILIPPIC AGAINST PANAMA'S PREMIER ANTI-
ZIONIST CARLOS PEREZ HERRERA, (REFTEL), SHOW TORRIJOS IS
CLEARLY DETERMINED TO LET COUSIN CARLOS STEW FOR A WHILE IN
HIS OWN JUICES. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN PASSED EXPLICITLY
FROM TORRIJOS TO THE PANAMANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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